



Usability Test Plan v 1.0

www.farecast.com

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Purpose

FareCast.com will be moving past the beta stage of their web site and want to identify usability problems with the search and filtering tools. Also taken into account are site navigation, help information and overall application satisfaction. Testing will focus on existing functionality and screen layout which, is the current Beta version of www.farecast.com. Findings and recommendations will be provided based on the results of the usability test.

Objectives

The objective is to answer the following questions:

- Are the users able to efficiently search for airfare tickets between specific dates and locations?
- Are the users able to successfully predict future airfares?
- Are the users able to successfully filter their results based on price and time?
- Do users understand the difference between web site functionality and advertisements on the right hand side of the web site?
- Are the users able to successfully select a flight to complete the search and purchase an airline ticket?
- How easily/effectively can users find help information?
- Discover overall satisfaction of the users experience through follow up satisfaction based questions.

User profile and recruitment

We will be looking for 4-5 participants who are comfortable with e-commerce and have purchased airline tickets over the internet. An ideal customer sample would involve both frequent travelers/business travelers (10 and more times a year) and less frequent travelers/pleasure travelers (Less than 3 times a year). All participants should have knowledge of the domain and have traveled via airline within the past year.

Test design (method)

1. Greeting

Test team will greet participant, do introductions, and make the participant feel comfortable.

2. Orientation

Participants will receive a short, verbal introduction that includes:

- purpose of informal session
- why their feedback is important
- participation is anonymous (Consent Document in Appendix)
- data is confidential and what will happen with the data collected (Consent Document in Appendix)
- participation is voluntary and participant can stop at any time (Consent Document in Appendix)
- the approximate time of the session
- what they will be asked to do
- that notes will be taken

3. Brief Users and Contextual Questions

Participants will be asked to briefly describe their travel lifestyle, and most frequent internet and e-commerce activities. Then they will be asked whether they currently use an online travel site to book airline tickets, and if they do what web sites do they use.

4. Web Browsing

Participants will be told they are going to be browsing a live web site to get their feedback on elements within the screen. They will be asked to provide their impression of what is contained within the screens.

5. Assign and Perform Tasks

Participants will be asked to do the tasks determined for the testing session. The first task will start from searching the web site for airline tickets. Participants will be provided dummy data for areas where data entry is required; they will navigate freely within the site in order to complete their task. Users will also be asked to talk aloud while performing their tasks and will be asked for their opinion after the completion of each task.

6. Additional Information

Participants will be asked additional questions to determine their overall satisfaction with the application.

7. Debriefing

Participants will be asked if they have any questions or comments on the session and probed for problem areas.

8. Thanks and Goodbye

Participants will be thanked for their time and input.

Task list

Topic	Objective	Task 1
<p>How users search for tickets</p> <p>2-5 min</p>	<p>Are the users able to efficiently search for airfare tickets between specific dates and locations?</p>	<p>You want to travel to Houston, Texas in a few days and you want to know the price of a roundtrip ticket and if the rate will increase or decrease in subsequent days.</p> <p>Your first task is to perform a search for this ticket from Midway Airport in Chicago to Intercontinental Airport in Houston. The departure date will be of November 2nd, with the return date of November 15th.</p> <p>[When complete.] What did you think about that task? Thank you. We'll now move to the next task.</p>

Topic	Objective	Task 2
<p>Airfare prediction</p> <p>2-5 min</p>	<p>Are the users able to successfully predict future airfares?</p>	<p>You will now go ahead and attempt to predict the prices for the airfare for the next week. Let us know by thinking aloud your findings.</p> <p>[When complete.] What did you think about that task? Thank you. We'll now move to the next task.</p>

Topic	Objective	Task 3
Filter and narrow results 2-5 min	Are the users able to successfully filter their results based on price and time?	Your next task will be to filter the results for the most inexpensive ticket for the flight that leaves in the morning on the departure date and in the afternoon on the return date. Please remember to think aloud as it aids in our full understanding of your interaction with the application. [When complete.] What did you think about that task? Thank you. We'll now move to the next task.

Topic	Objective	Task 6
Web site help 4-6 min	How easily/effectively can users find help information?	You want to find out how to best utilize this application to predict airfare prices, where do you think you would go to find that information? [When complete.] What did you think about that task? Thank you. We'll now move to the next task.

End of tasks: for follow up questions see appendix

Test environment, equipment, location and dates

Testing will be conducted onsite at DePaul University, if possible in a quiet room or space. There will be room for the test team to take notes and for the user to view the prototypes easily. If possible, equipment will be provided to either video tape or audio tape the sessions. Simple desktop PC with a mouse and keyboard and the user will be browsing at the website, Farecast.com.

- **Dates TBD based on participants schedules:**

Team Roles

Nils Hanson: Moderator

Penny Sriyawong: Data Logger

Abisola Agbabiaka: Timer

Data to be collected

- observations of team
- tracking of successful completion of tasks
- comments of participants
- demographic and other data on participants
- video available for review/validation as needed

Contents of the report

The contents of the report will address the results, findings and recommendations discovered during the testing which, will be aligned with the test objectives to provide actionable improvements to the application.

Appendix: Script, Questionnaires & Consent Forms

Script

Hello, my name is _____. I first of all want to thank you for volunteering your time to help us with this test today. I will now go ahead and inform you about the purpose for this test. A travel airfare company called FareCast will be moving past the beta stage of their web site, FareCast.com. We would like to identify usability problems that would enable us to see what improvements and adjustments need to be made that will enhance the usability of the site.

We are asking a variety of people who are comfortable with e-commerce and have purchased airline tickets over the internet to attempt various tasks on the website in order to understand how well users interact with the application.

Before we proceed with the tasks, we need to have your consent to participate in this session. Please read this form and sign it if you agree with what it says.
(Before beginning the test, the test monitor will collect the consent form from test participants)

Thank you again for participating today. Some key things to remember as we go are:

1. There is no right or wrong answers; we are not testing you or your abilities to use the Web.
2. We are interested in your feedback, positive or negative about the FareCast web site. .
3. Everything you say is confidential and will only be used in combination with the feedback we get from other people.

You are going to browse a live web site and we want to ask you to give us feedback on elements within the screen. We have a total of 6 tasks, and I will give them to you one at a time. I will be asking you to 'think aloud' so please openly state what is on your mind as you move through the web site. I may also prompt you from time to time to ask you what you are thinking. Please note if you ask for help or have any questions I will most likely turn it back on you, as the goal is to understand your opinions about the web site.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Intro Questions

1. Briefly describe your travel lifestyle.
2. Do you currently use an online travel site to book airline tickets and if they do what web sites do they use?

Task 1

You want to travel to Houston, Texas in a few days and you want to know the price of a roundtrip ticket and if the rate will increase or decrease in subsequent days.

Your first task is to perform a search for this ticket from O'Hare Airport in Chicago to Intercontinental Airport in Houston. The departure date will be of November 2nd, with the return date of November 15th.

[When complete.] What did you think about that task?

Thank you. We'll now move to the next task.

Task 2

You will now go ahead and attempt to predict the prices for the airfare for the next week. Let us know by thinking aloud your findings.

[When complete.] What did you think about that task?

Thank you. We'll now move to the next task.

Task 3

Your next task will be to narrow the results for the least expensive ticket for the flight that leaves in the morning on the departure date. Also narrow your results to display only the flights departing in the afternoon on the return date. Please remember to think aloud as it aids in our full understanding of your interaction with the application.

[When complete.] What did you think about that task?

Thank you. We'll now move to the next task.

Task 4

Your next task will be to select a so you can purchase tickets.

[When complete.] What did you think about that task?

Thank you. We'll now move to the next task.

Task 5

When looking at the right column of the page what type of information do you think is displayed there?

[When complete.] What did you think about that task?

Thank you. We'll now move to the next task.

Task 6

You want to find out how to best utilize this application to predict airfare prices, where do you think you would go to find that information?

[When complete.] What did you think about that task?

Thank you. We'll now move to the next task.

After the participants completes all of the tasks.

Questionnaires

Please circle the statement below each question that best describes your opinion.

1) I was able to confidently perform the actions to complete the tasks.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Mildly Disagree

Mildly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

2) I would be willing to use this application again when searching for airline tickets.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Mildly Disagree

Mildly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

3) I found searching airfare method easy to use.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Mildly Disagree

Mildly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

4) I found fare predictions and fare history information helpful and easy to understand.

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Mildly Disagree
Mildly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

5) I found the results page easy to review (this includes, schedule, price, airline, departure time and arrival time)

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Mildly Disagree
Mildly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

6) I found the help information useful and easy to understand.

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Mildly Disagree
Mildly Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

7) I will recommend farecast website to friends and family.

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Mildly Disagree
Mildly Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

[If videotaping.] We will now stop the videotape.

Please give any comments and/or suggestions you have:

Debrief

Once again, I'd like to say thanks for coming today and we appreciate your time and input.

[Give the participant their payment at this time, if applicable.]

Do you have any comments or questions about today's session?

Consent Form

Please read the consent form.

In this usability test:

- You will be asked to perform certain tasks on a website.
- We will also conduct interview with you.
- You will be asked to fill in a questionnaire.

Please note that participation in this usability study is voluntary. All information will remain strictly confidential. The descriptions and findings may be used to help improve the web site. However, at no time will your name or any other identification be used. You can withdraw your consent to this session and stop participation at any time.

I have read and understood the information on this form and had all of my questions answered.

Participant's Signature

Date

Usability Proctor

Date